THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) Certain exemptions with respect to customs and excise duties are available uniformly to public funded research institutions or a university or a non-commercial research institutions other than a hospital. Similarly direct tax concessions are available in respect of institutions engaged in research including medical research. Fiscal concessions, with respect to both direct or indirect taxes, are not confined to private institutions only.

(b) A number of direct tax concessions are available to the institutions which are engaged in the field of medical research as well as the institutions engaged in providing simple health care and related medical activities. These concessions are available subject to fulfilment of necessary conditions and safeguards. Exemption from customs and excise duties is available to the import or purchase of scientific apparatus, equipment and consumables, by public funded research institutions and non-commercial research institutions, other than hospitals, subject to certain conditions.

(c) In view of the reply to (a) and (b) above, the question of taking steps against private profiteering does not arise.

News-item regarding protest against delay in Adoption of recommendations of Pay Commission

4301. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item in the Tribune, dated the 23rd April, 1997 regarding a dharna by about 3000 Central Government employees in protest against the inordinate delay in the adoption of the recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission.

(b) whether it is a fact that Government have constituted three different committees to go into the different recommendations made by the Commission;

(c) if so, whether they have since submitted their reports in the matter; and

(d) if so, the reasons for the delay in accepting the various recommendations made by the Commission and by when Government are likely to accept them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The Government has set up only one Committee viz Empowered Committee to scrutnise and obtain orders of the Government on the various recommendations of the Fifth Central Pay Commission. There has been no delay in consideration of the Report of the Pay Commission. In accordance with the established procedure, the recommendations are required to be scrutinised by an Empowered Committee, which has already met four times. The views of the Staff Side are also required to be ascertained. A meeting has been held with them. The report is being processed further. The Government is taking steps that decisions are taken soon.

Computerisation of SBI

4302. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the State Bank of India is now gearing up to fully computerise its branches;

(b) if so, the total capital cost of the project;

(c) the amount of business generated per employee prior to computerisation and the estimated business per employees to be generated post-computerisation; and

(d) what other parameters would be